English Connects Professional development for teachers

Unit 9: Teaching Grammar

Trainer Notes

Learning outcomes

Notes: The following summary explains what participants can expect to achieve by following the tasks in this worksheet. It is followed by guidance notes to support the trainer in facilitating the video tasks in a teacher training session.

The aim of this module is to equip teachers with approaches and activities to teach use of language (grammar) to students in their classes.

This unit complements the professional practice of 'Planning Lessons and Courses' from the CPD Framework for teachers https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/planning-lessons-courses

By the end of this module the participants will be able to:

- Identify a number of techniques, approaches and activities to give meaningful grammar practice to their students.
- Understand better the rationale behind the techniques and approaches mentioned.
- Analyse techniques used by the teachers in the video footage.
- Compare the approaches shown with their own classroom practice.

1 Lead-in

1.1

Notes: Conduct this lead-in stage with participants in small groups. Encourage participants to reflect back and compare notes on their own experiences of learning English and developing their language skills. If materials are available, participants could create mind maps of their ideas, or a collective mind map could be produced on the board.

Encourage participants to start to make connections between what factors motivated them in their language learning experience and how they could bring this experience into their own language practice in the classroom, especially in the teaching and learning of grammar.

Then watch and listen to the first part of the commentary to check ideas. Stop just after ['… *learning takes place*.'] to take feedback.

Work in groups.

First, you are going to compare your own experience of learning English grammar. Discuss these questions.

- What have you found most challenging about learning English grammar in your own education?

- What factors or experiences have helped or motivated you?

Notes:

1.2

Notes: Watch and listen to the first part of the commentary. Stop just after ['… *end of the video.*'] so participants can discuss the on-screen task. Ask participants to take notes and keep in mind their responses at this stage, as they work through the video. Explain that the session will return to these questions at the end, during *Reflection,* when they will get a chance to compare their responses with what they have seen in the video.

Watch and listen to the first part of the commentary. Think about how you teach grammar to your students. Then discuss with a partner and make notes about:

- **Which techniques and tasks have worked successfully for you in class?**

- **What challenges have you faced?**

Notes:

Answers: Participants' own answers.

1.3

Notes: Watch and listen to the next part of the commentary. Stop just after ['… *going to present these.*'] so participants can discuss the on-screen task. Explain that they will watch several sections of Anderson's lesson, before coming back to this task.

Teacher in the video: 1 Anderson (Cote D'Ivoire).

Listen to the next part of the video, introducing Anderson's lesson. Work in pairs.

Can you predict the order of the stages of Anderson's grammar focus?

1 Focusing on the form of the target language
2 Introducing the target language
3 Free practice
4 Choral drilling
5 Controlled practice
6 Establishing a context (how the language is used)

Notes:

As you are watching the section of Anderson's lesson, see if your predictions match the order of the stages.

Answers: 6, 2, 4, 1, 5, 3

2 Establishing a context

2.1

Notes: Have participants read the gapped paragraph below first. More confident groups could try and predict the missing words first. Then watch and listen to the next part of the commentary. Stop just after ['… Let's take a look.'] so participants can complete the transcript of the commentary below.

If appropriate, explore the idea of setting a context further here. You could ask participants to share similar approaches they have tried in class, and examples of contexts that have represented particular grammar items well. Alternatively, this idea could be explored at the end of Anderson's section, when we see the results of his approach with his class.

Listen to the next part of the commentary and complete the gaps. Compare your answers with a partner.

Anderson starts off with the most [1]_____ stage of all – establishing a

[2]_____ for the grammar item. This means that he gets his students

to understand first how to [3]_____ the grammar by presenting a

[4]_____ they can relate to.

Answers: 1 important; 2 context; 3 use; 4 situation.

Notes:

2.2

Notes: Before watching the first part of Anderson's grammar presentation, have participants read the questions below first, so they keep them in mind while they are watching the clip. Then play the segment.

After viewing the clips, give participants a minute or so to check their answers with each other, then conduct feedback.

Watch the first part of Anderson's grammar presentation in the video. While you're watching, think about:

- What context or situation does Anderson use to introduce 'should' and 'shouldn't'?

- Do you think this is a suitable context? Why? Why not?

Notes:
Answers: Anderson uses the context of the practice of using skin bleaching products to introduce 'should' and 'shouldn't'. He introduces the context with realia (skin bleaching products).
+ Participants' own answers.

3 Introducing the target language: Choral drilling

3.1

Notes: Watch the next section. Then have participants discuss the questions in small groups and conduct feedback.

Watch the next section. After watching, discuss these questions in a small group.

- How do students benefit from choral drilling?

- What other choral drilling techniques do you practise in class? Make notes of useful techniques.

Notes:

Answers: **Choral drilling** can be very effective in helping students to consolidate the target language. The act of 'voicing' the language helps them to memorise the forms and patterns within it.

There are numerous approaches which can make choral drilling into an effective, fun and animated activity, eg:

Back chaining: repeating the target sentence from the last word backwards to the first word, building the sentence with each repetition. This can be very effective in helping students memorise language patterns.

Choosing different groups (rather than the whole class at once) to perform the repetitions (eg. boys and girls, back / front row etc. Anderson does this with the football teams in his class.

Clapping or finger clicking the rhythm of the sentence.

Using Gestures: highlighting key components with fingers or hands.

Encourage participants to share other techniques that work for them in class.

4 Focusing on the form of the target language

4.1

Notes: Before watching the next section, have participants read the questions below first, so they keep them in mind while they are watching the clip. Then play the segment.

After viewing the clips, give participants a minute or so to check their answers with each other, then conduct feedback.

Watch the next part of the video, then discuss the question in your group.

- Why do you think Anderson focuses on the form of the grammar now and not before?

- How does this approach benefit the students?

> Notes:
>
> Answers: It is important to focus first on the context of the target language first before looking at how it is formed. This approach makes the language more memorable and relatable for students. Once they understand how language is used (the context), they can look at the more technical aspects of how it is formed.

5 Controlled practice

5.1

Notes: Before watching, have participants read through the task below. Explain that they are now going to watch the next section and listen for the two key verbs. Play the next section, from ['*Onto the next stage…*'] until [… *compare their answers in pairs*].

After viewing the clips, give teachers a minute or so to check their answers with each other, then conduct feedback.

Watch the section and listen to the commentary. Answer the questions with your partner.

- Identify **2 verbs** (used by the narrator) that are important to this stage?

<u>c</u>_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _   <u>c</u> _ _ _ _ _ _
(to become stronger)   (examine differences)

- How are these techniques important in controlled practice?

> Notes:
> Answers: 2 verbs: consolidate / compare.

6 Free practice

6.1

Notes: Before listening to the next part of the commentary, have participants read the questions below first, so they keep them in mind while they are listening. Then play the segment.

After viewing the clips, give participants a minute to check their answers with each other, then conduct feedback.

Listen to the commentary. Then discuss the questions with your partner.

- What 'free practice' task does Anderson give his students?

- How do students benefit from this type of task?

Notes:

Answers: **Free practice task:** The students must write advice for a sister who is under pressure to bleach her skin.

Benefits for students: It is a context which allows students to practise the target language in a natural, authentic way, and give a personal individual response to the task. This makes the language practice much more motivating and relatable for the students.

6.2

Notes: Before watching the next section of the video, have participants read the question below first, so they keep it in mind while they are watching. Then play the segment.

After viewing the clip, give participants a minute to check their answers with each other, then conduct feedback.

Watch what Anderson's students produced in the free practice task. After watching, discuss these questions with your group.

- How did the students respond to the task? Why do you think this was?

Answers: Participants' own answers.

6.3

Notes: Now refer participants back to the lesson stages shown at the beginning of this section. Give them a few minutes to compare notes about the order of stages. Then run the video so the feedback screen appears for participants to check their answers.

Think back to the lesson stages from the beginning of Anderson's class. Compare your answers with a partner. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

Answers: **Order of stages for the grammar focus:**
6 Establishing a context (how the language is used)
2 Introducing the target language
4 Choral drilling
1 Focusing on the form of the target language
5 Controlled practice
3 Free practice

Note: Refer to the video, Unit 3 Observing Anderson's Lesson, for a closer look at Anderson's whole lesson.

7 Grammar timelines

7.1

Notes: You could start this section with a simple grammar timeline drawn on a board or flipchart. Ask participants if they know what it is and if they have ever used one. Explain what it is and its use (see Answers) and then have them discuss their experiences of using this explanation tool.

Before you watch the next section, discuss the questions with your group.

- What is a grammar timeline?

- Have you ever used ones in your classes?

- Can you give your group any examples?

Answers: Definition of a grammar timeline: Timelines are diagrams that illustrate the reference to time made by a given piece of language. They are used to show how a particular language item (often a verb in a particular tense and aspect) places particular events or situations in time and in relation to other events.

(Source: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/timelines)
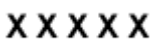
Participants' own answers.
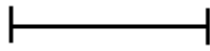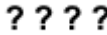
7.2

Notes: Ask participants to look at the matching activity below in their booklets and work together to work out the matching symbols and descriptions.

Look at these timeline symbols with your group. Match them to a description.

Timeline symbols

1 A single event or action

2 A repeated action or habit

3 A permanent state or situation

4 A temporary state, situation or repeated/continuous action

5 Exact time of event is unknown

6 A point in time

7 A period in time

A

B   X

C

D   ? ? ? ?

E

F

G   X X X X X

Answers: 1 B / 2 G / 3 E / 4 F / 5 D / 6C / 7 A

1 A single event or action	**X**	B
2 A repeated action or habit	**X X X X X**	G
3 A permanent state or situation	——————	E
4 A temporary state, situation or repeated/continuous action	∿∿∿∿∿	F
5 Exact time of event is unknown	**? ? ? ?**	D
6 A point in time	↓	C
7 A period in time	⊢———⊣	A

7.3

Notes: Ask participants to look at the timeline examples below in their booklets and match each one with the names of the verb tenses.

This is a relatively simple activity designed to give participants a focus while they study the examples. If you feel it is too simple for your group, you could ask the participants to critique the examples. How far do they go to clarify the meaning of the target tenses? Could the examples be improved? How would participants phrase the demonstration if they were showing any of the examples to their students in class?

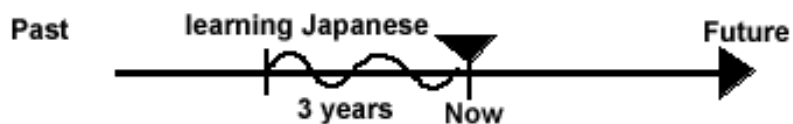Look at the timeline examples. Match each one to the correct verb tense.

Timeline examples

a) Present perfect simple   b) Present simple
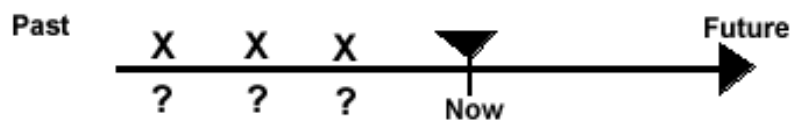c) Present perfect continuous   d) Past continuous

1   Last night, I was walking home when I slipped on the path.

2   I have been learning Japanese for three years.

Past   learning Japanese   Future

3 years   Now

3   I have been to New Zealand, Iceland and Taiwan.

Past   X   X   X   Future

?   ?   ?   Now

4   I get up at seven o'clock every day.

Past   X X X X X X ▼ X X X   Future

Now

Answers: 1=d (past continuous); 2=c (present perfect continuous); 3=a (present perfect simple); 4=b (present simple).

Source: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/timelines

7.4

Notes: Before watching the next section of the video, have participants read the question below first, so they keep it in mind while they are watching. Then play the commentary and segment.

After viewing the clip, give participants a minute to check their answers with each other, then check with the feedback screen.

▷ 👤 Watch the next section, where you will see a teacher using a timeline to help her students understand the present perfect continuous tense. Think about:

- Why is a timeline effective in checking understanding of the present perfect continuous tense?

Notes

👥💬 Compare your answers with your group. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

Answers: The present perfect tense covers both the past and present time. This can be a difficult concept for students to grasp. The timeline gives a simple visual to show an action starting in the past and continuing in the present time.

Teacher in the video: 1 Anestine (Cameroon).

7.5

Notes: For this section, create some example sentences covering several verb tenses, tailored to the language level of your participants. Then put them in small groups and have them create timelines to explain the example sentences. If time is short, you could give one per group to work on, then have them share their ideas, either in plenary or by teaming up with another group.

👥💬📝 Your trainer will give you some example sentences. Working with your group, draw a timeline to demonstrate the sentences. Then share your timeline with other groups.

Answers: Participants' own answers.

8 Highlighting language patterns

8.1

Notes: Before watching the next section, have participants work in small groups to discuss the questions below first. After a few minutes, conduct feedback and ask them to keep their replies to the second question in mind while they watch the commentary introducing the next classroom clip.

Before you watch the next section, discuss the questions with your group.

- Do you teach any younger learners? Which age groups do you teach?
- **Answers:**   Participants' own answers.

- How might teaching grammar to younger learners be different to older age groups?
- **Suggested answer:** Younger learners need to be encouraged to notice simple common patterns within the grammar sets they are learning, eg. the use of the auxiliary verb, *don't* or *doesn't* in present simple negative sentences or the use of the auxiliary verbs, *am/is/are* and the *-ing* form of the verb in present continuous sentences. This approach is preferable to using lots of technical terms to explain grammatical structures.

Notes

8.2

Notes: Have participants read the gapped paragraph below first. More confident groups could try and predict the missing words first. Then watch and listen to the next part of the commentary. Stop just after ['… *technical terms and explanations*.'] so participants can complete the transcript of the commentary below. Have them check in pairs. Conduct feedback, drawing parallels with any similar responses given to the second discussion question in 8.1.

Listen to the commentary for the next section. As you listen, complete the key words in the transcript below. Then check your answers with a partner.

Younger students can find technical grammar terms too [1]_____ to understand.

The answer is to set up an interesting [2]_____ for the target language,

then present the language so that the students start to notice [3]_____ in the

language.

Answers : 1 abstract; 2 context; 3 patterns

8.3

Notes: Before watching the next section, have participants read the questions below first, so they keep it in mind while they are watching. Then play the segment.

After viewing the clip, give participants a minute to check their answers with each other, then check with the feedback screen.

Now watch the next section. Think about:

- What target language is the focus of this clip?

- How does the teacher highlight the pattern?

| Notes |
| |

Compare your answers in pairs. Then check your ideas with the feedback screen.

Answers: Focus: Wh-questions
The teacher elicits the questions from the students using picture prompts. She writes them on the board and highlights the Wh-word at the beginning of each question.

To highlight the effectiveness of this approach, draw participants' attention to the moment in the clip where one student starts to notice more patterns in the examples with 'is'.

8.4

Notes: Have participants read the suggestions in small groups, then discuss and tick the ones that they have tried in class. They then consider the others and put a question mark next to ones that they would like to try in the future. Encourage them to discuss and add any further ideas to the list.

Conduct feedback, encouraging participants to share experiences of using these techniques and activities in class, and ideas for making them work. The message is that simple techniques such as these can be very effective in helping students to understand how to form, use and remember specific grammar points.

Work in a small group.

Look at the techniques for helping students to notice patterns in language. Tick (√) the techniques that you have tried and put a question mark (?) next to ones you would like to try in the future. Can you think of any more to add to the list?

- Sorting the words in jumbled sentences.

- Highlighting different parts of speech on the board or worksheets (eg. circling or colouring)

- Highlighting specific parts in choral drilling.

- Songs and chants, emphasising target language and parts of speech.

Answers: Participants' own answers.

9 Reflection

9.1

Notes: Have participants refer back to the notes they made in response to the question at the beginning of the session, *Which grammar techniques and tasks have worked successfully for you in class? What challenges have you faced?* Ask them to consider the approaches seen in the video and compare. For this stage, have them working individually, then compare notes in a small group.

Have participants work in groups for the rest of the discussion questions. Then have them share their thoughts with the whole group.

Work individually first, then compare your responses in a small group. Look at the list you made at the beginning of the video when considering the first question.

1   Which approaches to teaching grammar have worked well in your lessons? Which similar approaches did you see in the video?

2   Which approaches seen in the video did you like? Why? Compare your views with your colleagues.

3   Which approaches are you going to try in your next grammar class?

Notes:

9.2 Action plan

Adjust your CPD Action Plan to include a specific action point about teaching grammar.

Notes:

10 Explore

In this video you saw several approaches to **teaching grammar**.

In this section you can follow up on the video by accessing a number of **articles, activities**, and **videos** on the BBC and British Council's **TeachingEnglish website**. These should provide you with further ideas, activities, knowledge, skills and techniques to fully maximise opportunities for teaching grammar in your classes. You may also be interested in looking at Unit 6 in this series: *Observing Elsie's grammar lesson*.

Sub-topic:	Title:	Link:	Type of Resource:	Summary:
Teaching language/ grammar	**"Raymond Murphy"**	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/raymond-murphy-visits-russia (08:18 – 56:00)	**Video Raymond Murphy**	How much grammar terminology do your students need to know? In this talk the author of *English Grammar in Use* questions some of the terms used by grammar books, textbooks and teachers, and talks about 'unhappy terminology', 'unnecessary terminology' and 'really unnecessary terminology'!
	"Analysing language"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/analysing-language	**Article Steve Darn**	What do you and your students need to know about a new language item? This article looks at form, phonology, meaning, function and register (or appropriacy). There is also a downloadable analysis form to use when you are planning a language lesson.
	"Jazzing up grammar"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/jazzing-grammar	**Article Jo Budden**	In this article Jo presents some ways of making your grammar lessons meaningful: finding real situations where particular grammar structures are used; ways of personalising the topic; using time-lines to clarify different tenses. She also looks at the use of metalanguage (linguistic terminology) and suggests asking your students how they like to learn grammar.
	"One good way to practise grammar in speaking"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/alexei-kiselev/one-good-way-practise-grammar-speaking	**Article Alexei Kiselev**	One of the most effective features of Anderson's lesson is the way he personalises the topic. Many textbooks include "Now speak about yourself" exercises, but this short article builds on the principle of personalisation to encourage students to go beyond the textbook and make grammar practice really meaningful.

Teaching language/ grammar	**"Teaching grammar"**	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/B127c%20A1%20TE%20Staff%20Room%20Posters%201.pdf	**Poster**	If you find teaching grammar rather dry, you might like this poster for teachers – three lively and motivating game-like activities for practising grammar.
Providing clear language models	**"Integrating pronunciation into classroom activities"**	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/integrating-pronunciation-classroom-activities	**Article Barry Griffiths**	The author of this article believes that there are opportunities in every lesson to work on pronunciation by using student talk. Barry gives examples of simple activities to practise word stress, vowel sounds, diphthongs, weak forms, and sentence stress.
	"Developing pronunciation through songs"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-pronunciation-through-songs	**Article Balbina Ebong & Marta J. Sabbadini**	Songs can provide memorable ways for students to notice and get to know features of pronunciation. In this article two teachers from British Council, Cameroon give examples of using songs to focus on individual sounds, word stress, and features of connected speech.
Checking understanding and getting feedback	**"Checking comprehension"**	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/checking-comprehension	**Article Clare Lavery**	If you ask students, "Do you understand?" they may answer 'yes' to avoid losing face, or they may just *think* they have understood. In this article Clare suggests some practical ideas for you to check comprehension, or get students to do the checking themselves.
	"What are some of the best or most effective ways you've found of giving feedback to your students or doing error correction?"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/rebeccawicker/what-are-some-best-or-most-effective-ways-youve-found-giving-feedback-your	**Article Rebecca Wicker**	An engaging activity that involves all the skills and makes students responsible for feedback. The activity is based on 'dictogloss' (sometimes called grammar dictation) a classroom dictation activity where learners are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for them to reconstruct the text.
	"Giving learners feedback on their writing"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/loli-iglesias/giving-learners-feedback-their-writing	**Article Loli Iglesias**	Feedback is not just correction! It's important to see students' writing as part of a learning process rather than an imperfect product. This article suggests some excellent principles to keep in mind when you're setting written work and giving students feedback and recommends some practical ways of making your feedback constructive and supportive.

Checking understanding and getting feedback	"Feedback on writing"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/ninamk/feedback-writing-0	Article Nina MK	How can you correct students' written work without discouraging them? The writer of this article suggests some useful *do*s and *don't*s for correcting and responding to students' writing, which will work with learners of all ages.
	"Writing correction code"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/writing-correction-code	Article Paul Kaye	Instead of correcting students' writing, you could use a 'correction code' to get students to think about their language and try to correct their mistakes. You can design your own correction code, or you can use the one provided (link at the end of the article).
Further Professional Development / observing other teachers	"Classroom-based Teacher Development"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/willy-cardoso-classroom-based-teacher-development (from 04:01)	Webinar Willy Cardoso	In this webinar, Willy talks about four approaches to teacher development: observation (whether by a colleague or through recording); involving your learners in the process; the validity of bottom-up knowledge; and what he calls critical teacher development. The key feature that these approaches have in common is that they are not imposed by anyone else – they all come from teachers and learners inside the classroom.
	"Transformer teachers"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/tim-phillips-transformer-teachers Presentation 0:01 – 24:30 Q&A 24.30 – 30:10	Webinar Tim Phillips	In this interactive presentation, which includes the voices of teachers from different parts of the world, Tim asks how you can develop as a teacher. He uses the British Council CPD framework for teachers to build a profile of the "transformer teacher".
	"Peer observation: How can we make it work?"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/andy-hockley-peer-observation-how-can-we-make-it-work	Webinar Andy Hockley	Another interactive presentation in which Andy reports on his own investigation of teachers' attitudes to observation, discusses some of the challenges and apparent obstacles, and proposes some practical ways of making it happen.
	"Successful teacher collaboration – Two teachers – Two roles – One class"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/neil-t-millington/ successful-teacher-collaboration-two-teachers-two-roles-one-class	Article Neil T. Millington	This article describes a highly original approach to peer observation, when the writer and a colleague put their classes together, with one of them teaching and the other working with the students and observing the lesson 'from the inside' as a participant-observer.
	"Observing others and being observed"	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/ninamk/observing-others-being-observed	Article Nina MK	Reflections by a teacher in this article on some of the things she has learned about her classroom, her teaching and her students from her experiences as both observer and observee.

Back page design

CODE for module